



# WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development  
Office of Economic Advisors

## FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

ASHLAND, BAYFIELD, BURNETT, DOUGLAS, IRON, PRICE, RUSK, SAWYER, TAYLOR, WASHBURN

May  
2005

### Early spring boosts employment - reduces unemployment rates

Workers in Northwest Wisconsin who were unemployed in March found jobs in April as temperatures warmed and employers recalled seasonally laid off workers. With fewer unemployed in the northwest region the unemployment rate dropped to 6.2 percent in April from 7.3 percent in March and was lower than the 6.5 percent rate of April 2004.

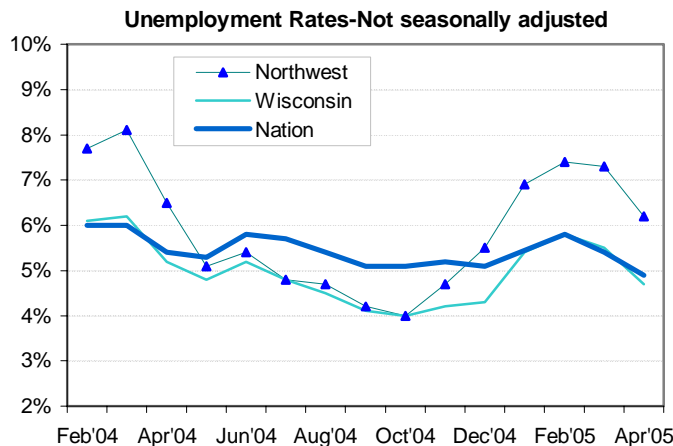
Unemployment rates dropped from March to April in 71 of the

state's 72 counties including all ten counties of Northwest Wisconsin. The State of Wisconsin unemployment rate in April was 4.7 percent, not seasonally adjusted, down from 5.5 percent in March and from 5.2 percent one year earlier. Seasonally adjusted the state rate in April was 4.5 percent. The national unemployment rate, not seasonally adjusted, in April was 4.9 percent and, seasonally adjusted, was 5.2 percent.

The northwest region unemployment rate plummeted when over 1,000 residents either returned to work or a found new job. The April count of unemployed residents of 6,160 was reduced from 7,270 unemployed in March and from 6,230 last April. The primary reason for the reduction was an increase in jobs.

With more jobs in the region the number of employed increased from 92,500 in March to 93,970 in April. This was the strongest employment gain in April since 2001 and the largest increase in workers in the last ten months.

Construction projects got off to an early start with warm April temperatures and construction employers added more workers this April than in previous years. Not only did construction employment increased by 465 jobs in April but employment in professional and business services (includes landscaping) increased by 280 jobs. Also related to the warmer spring temperatures was the increase of 220 jobs in government employment as workers returned to jobs with parks and rec-



	Feb'04	Mar'04	Apr'04	Feb'05	Mar'05	Apr'05
Northwest	7.7%	8.1%	6.5%	7.4%	7.3%	6.2%
Wisconsin	6.1%	6.2%	5.2%	5.8%	5.5%	4.7%
Nation	6.0%	6.0%	5.4%	5.8%	5.4%	4.9%

### Civilian Labor Force Estimates\* for Northwest Wisconsin counties: April 2005

	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04
Labor force	10,314	10,266	10,226	9,146	9,119	9,067	8,306	8,200	8,286	23,236	23,195	23,391	3,997	4,228	4,218
Employed	9,739	9,592	9,577	8,582	8,452	8,440	7,810	7,586	7,819	21,995	21,751	22,073	3,703	3,891	3,801
Unemployed	575	674	649	564	667	627	496	614	467	1,241	1,444	1,318	294	337	417
% unemployed	5.6	6.6	6.3	6.2	7.3	6.9	6.0	7.5	5.6	5.3	6.2	5.6	7.4	8.0	9.9

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04
Labor force	8,957	8,914	8,633	7,647	7,683	7,629	8,777	8,712	8,540	11,483	11,359	11,231	8,268	8,082	8,137
Employed	8,483	8,395	8,143	7,079	6,977	7,062	8,167	7,979	7,891	10,703	10,448	10,537	7,708	7,419	7,589
Unemployed	474	519	490	568	706	567	610	733	649	780	911	694	560	663	548
% unemployed	5.3	5.8	5.7	7.4	9.2	7.4	6.9	8.4	7.6	6.8	8.0	6.2	6.8	8.2	6.7

\* not seasonally adjusted

## Industry Employment Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin: Current month - April 2005

(Employment in thousands)	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04
Total Nonfarm	9.0	8.9	8.9	3.9	3.8	3.7	5.1	5.0	5.2	17.8	17.4	17.9	2.0	2.1	2.1
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.2
Manufacturing	1.2	1.2	1.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.3
Trade	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	2.9	2.9	3.0	0.4	0.3	0.4
Transportation & Utilities	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.2	2.2	2.1	0.1	0.1	0.0
Financial Activities	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education & Health Services	1.8	1.8	1.8	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.7	0.7	2.0	2.0	2.0	0.3	0.3	0.3
Leisure & Hospitality	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	2.2	2.1	2.2	0.3	0.4	0.3
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.4	3.0	2.9	3.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total Government	2.0	2.0	2.1	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.5	3.2	3.1	3.3	0.4	0.4	0.4
	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04	Apr '05	Mar '05	Apr '04
Total Nonfarm	7.0	7.0	6.6	5.7	5.6	5.7	6.9	6.6	6.8	9.4	9.1	9.2	6.2	5.9	6.0
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Manufacturing	2.6	2.6	2.4	1.9	1.9	1.9	0.4	0.4	0.4	2.7	2.7	2.8	1.0	0.9	0.9
Trade	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.5	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.0	0.9	1.0
Transportation & Utilities	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2
Financial Activities	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Education & Health Services	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.9
Leisure & Hospitality	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.5	1.5	1.4	0.5	0.5	0.5
Total Government	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.3	2.1	2.0	2.2	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.4

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2004 benchmark. Summing from unrounded numbers.

rection departments, and road maintenance crews began grading and clearing right-of-ways. In April there were nearly 3,400 jobs in the region with construction and natural resource employers; over 8,700 jobs with information, professional and business services employers; and 15,400 jobs in government (including local and state education and Indian-owned operations).

Manufacturing employment rebounded somewhat after dropping in March, but only a few counties in the northwest region reported an up-tick in production jobs. A net increase of 50 jobs in April produced a new total of 12,200 manufacturing jobs in Northwest Wisconsin. Typically, the largest increase in manufacturing employment occurs during the next two months.

Employers in trade and leisure and hospitality industries also began hiring in April as preparations for summer got underway. Both in-

dustries added roughly 150 workers in April.

The net increase in jobs this April of 1,500 is larger than normal due to the unseasonably warm temperatures and the early start to spring projects. As might be expected over half of the increase in jobs occurred in construction and business services. Because of the early call to work the number of total nonfarm jobs in Northwest Wisconsin of 73,050 in April is 900 higher than one year ago.

Spring hiring activity occurred in each of the ten counties in Northwest Wisconsin and resulted in a reduction in the number of unemployed residents. All ten counties reported a lower unemployment rate during the month and in six of the region's ten counties the April rate was lower than twelve months earlier. Statewide, 54 counties showed lower unemployment rates than one year ago.

Even with a reduction in local unemployment five counties in Northwest Wisconsin were still ranked among the ten counties in the state with the highest unemployment rates in April. Ranked 4<sup>th</sup> highest in the state, the unemployment rate in Rusk County was 7.4 percent in April. Ranked 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> highest and in descending order of unemployment rate were Iron County (7.4%), Sawyer County (6.9%), Washburn County (6.8%), and Taylor County (6.8%). Bayfield County, with a 6.2 percent unemployment rate ranked 16<sup>th</sup> highest in the state and Burnett, with a 6.0 percent rate, ranked 18<sup>th</sup> highest.

With lower unemployment rates but still among the highest in the state were Ashland County with a 5.6 percent rate, Douglas with 5.3 percent, and Price with a 5.3 percent unemployment rate in April.



**Find the most current Labor Market Information at: [WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI](http://WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI)**

Direct questions and comments to: **Beverly Gehrke, Labor Market Analyst**  
 Hayward Job Center, 15618 Windrose Lane, Ste. 108, Hayward, Wisconsin 54843  
 715-634-5289 715-634-6094(FAX) e-mail: [Beverly.Gehrke@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:Beverly.Gehrke@dwd.state.wi.us)